A

SERMON

Preached at the Visitation held at *High Wickham* in the County of *Bucks.* *May* 16. 1671.

WHEREIN

The Ministers *Duty* is Remembred.
Their *Dignity* Asserted.
Man's Reconciliation with God, urged.

By *Samuel Gardner* M. A.
and Chaplain to His Majesty.

...h the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, Reprove, ...buke, Exhort with all long-suffering and Doctrine. 2 Tim. ...: 2.

...d is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find ...e doing. Matth. 24. 46.

Φοβερὸν τοῖς τῶν Ἀγγέλων ὤμοις διυφάσκοντον.

...who is sufficient for these things? 2 Cor. 2. 16.

LONDON.

...ed by *T. Ratcliff*, and *N. Thompson*, for *Nath. Ranew* at the *Kings Arms* in S. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1672.

TO

The Right Reverend Father in God,

WILLIAM,

By Divine Providence Lord Biſhop of

LINCOLNE,

All Felicity and Cœleſtial Happineſs.

My Lord,

YOU may moſt juſtly Wonder at this attempt why I (the meaneſt of ſo many) ſhould expoſe my ſelf unto Publick view; and the manifold Cenſures which will inevitably follow hereupon.

Secondly, In this my bold addreſs unto Your Lordſhip in the Dedication, with ſo poor and bar-

ren a Sermon, upon so rich and fruitful a Text, wherein so many glorious things should be insisted on. But my fear is most the Censure of God; and that I may be afraid to Censure others.

I confess it's better to be haled in by force of others unto great Duties, then over hastily to rush upon them.

Your Lordship knows right well, That Forwardness argues Insufficiency.

They are modest beginnings, which give hopeful Proceedings, and happy Endings. Yet when I considered that Servant was Condemned of Evil, that gave God no more then his own, which he had received, Matth. 25. 27. *Though but one Talent, yet ought to have improved it.*

Then with neglect of Censure, contented to learn to be Contemned; I adventured to send forth this Plain Sermon into the World, seconded with many desires that the Blessing of Heaven may go along with it, under Your Lordships Patronage.

I Design nothing of Controversie; I inveigh not against any one; I would give no offence, neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, *but especially* to the Church of God. 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. *Nor yet to gratifie such as are accustomed to humane flourishes, oftentimes contracting* Itching Ears *do begin to loath the simplicity of the Gospel, and*

The

will not indure sound Doctrine. 2 *Tim.* 4. 3.

The efficacy of the Holy Spirit doth more appear in a naked simplicity of words, then in too much Elegancy and Neatness.

Hence Saint Paul *saith that he was* ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, Rude in Speech, yet not in Knowledge. 2 *Cor.* 11. 6.

Your Lordship is not ignorant that the two great Pillars, upon which the Kingdom of Satan is erected, and by which it is upheld, are Ignorance and Errour; The first of these is so far from being the Mother of all Devotion, that Saint Bernard *saith, it is* Mater omnium Vitiorum. *Bern. de ordine vitæ.*

Through the Power of the Gospel, and our careful Government, holy Discipline, we shall be much delivered from these Mischiefs.

Your Lordship hath now a large Opportunity for Gods glory, and the Churches good, to further, and honour, the truth of the Gospel in the Power and Purity of it while the Church of God shall be favoured with Your life, and happy continuance amongst us.

The Lord stretch out his holy Arm together with you in that great Charge committed to you, and make your Lordship as great a blessing, as faithful a favourite unto Piety, as great a supporter and encourager of the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and the most sincere, and Godly of your Lordships Diocess, as

ever

ever did Preceed you, or ever shall Succeed you. And then give you a full and an ample reward; that your last translation may be to a newer fading Crown, and such choice delights as never entred into the heart of man to conceive.

The Lord of Heaven and Earth bless your Lordship with many and happy days, and grant you true Felicity. Thus craving your Lordships pardon for my presumption, I subscribe my self

Your Lordships,

Humble Servant in all duty

and faithful Service,

Samuel Gardner.

Reverend and dear Sir,

Having lately had a happineſs to hear a Sermon read by a Reverend Friend, which not long ſince you Preached at a Viſitation, concerning the Dignity and Duty of Goſpel Miniſters. I could do no leſs, then ſignifie to you how much *I* was affected therewith; and how much I deſire You would make it Publick, being perſwaded that through the Bleſſing of God much good would accrew both to Miniſters and private Chriſtians, into whoſe hands it may come, who cannot but be both delighted and edified by reading it; and learn thereby, the one to be more painful in Preaching, and the other

other more careful in Hearing, and both more Conſciencious in living regularly.

Howſoever your Work and Labour of love, in ſo Learned and Powerful diſpenſation, ſhall be rewarded. Nor do I fear, as he who read your Sermon ſeemed to do, That any of the diſſenting Brethren that are truely pious and peacable, will take the leaſt offence at any paſſage therin. Which is all at preſent from your unworthy Brother, Friend and Servant,

John Bryan.

Toddington.
Sept. 6. 1671.

Miniſters

18.

Ministers Dignity and Duty.

A Sermon Preached at the Visitation held at High *Wickham* in the County of *Bucks*. *May* 16. 1671.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

Now then We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; We Pray you in Christs stead, be ye Reconciled to God.

THE great Ambassadours of Kings and Princes in this inferiour World Command Respect and Reverence from all beholders.

And what innumerable multitudes are there, whose highest Ambition it is, to feed their Eyes in viewing and beholding their goodly and comely Order, both in their access for Audience, and also in their retedure?

Here the Solemnity is more honoured, a greater Presence promised unto the end of the World. *Matth.* 28. 20 The very Attendance more glorious in nature then our selves. *Heb.* 1. 14.

The Place more beautiful and amiable, the things more rich and excellent, sublime and spiritual.

An inestimable treasure is now presented which excelleth all the Riches of the Earth, the unsearchable Riches of Christ. Τὸν ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτον τοῦ χριστοῦ. Riches that hath no footsteps, which cannot be traced out; that is the propriety of the Word.

Though we are men of like Passion with your selves, that Preach unto you, that ye should turn from Vanities unto the living God, which made Heaven and Earth, *&c. Acts* 14. 15. for that you are no more able of your selves to hear God speaking to you immediately in his own Wisdom, then *Israel*, in whose eyes the glory of God was like devouring Fire, and they as stubble before him. *Exod.* 20. 19.

Therefore let it content you, that you have this Heavenly Treasure, though in Earthen Vessels; that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us. 2 *Cor* 4. 7.

And seeing it is the pleasure of the Almighty God to have it so for his own Glory, and your eternal Happiness, is it fit and rational for Dust and Ashes to Dispute, and to be angry with the Judge of all the Earth? *Gen.* 18 25.

And for poor Wormes to rebel against their Maker, at whose Presence both Heaven and Earth doth tremble.

Here's Gods great Condescention, because of the weakness of our apprehension. And if there be humility of greatest Poverty, yet here is an ostentation of greatest glory. That no man might be offended, but rather stand astonished with an holy admiration at the infinite grace, wisdom, mercy, and goodness of God.

First, That his own Son, God blessed for ever, should assume humane nature to save us, to unite a Clod of Earth unto his Divine Person! That Christ should give this World so glorious, so magnificently great, and so happy a Visitation! Greater Condescention then if some great Prince should go into an Hospital to look on a lothsome diseased Creature.

Here's superabundant love of God in Jesus Christ, which transcends all the degrees of Comparison!

And then, that God should entreat, woo, and beseech us by the Ministry of his Ambassadors, that we would save our selves from everlasting ruine. That God should look upon all the Children of men in their fallen lost sinful and miserable Condition, with such pity and compassion; who have made themselves liable to eternal Wrath, which they understand not, which they are not able to bear; That God out of his infinite grace and wisdom should find out, and provide a way and means of Salvation: For the Children of men his professed Enemies.

In the words we have these particulars to be considered.

First, The Apostles illation, drawn from the Premisses, by which the

his Text hath his Coherence, with the precedent verses. And presents us with this instruction, That we are not bound to accept matters of Religion, meerly without all reason, and probable inducements.

Secondly, the assertion of the Subjects by plain Enunciation; *We are Ambassadours.*

Thirdly, the honourable Dignity of these Ambassadours, they are for Christ; *Ambassadours of Christ.*

Fourthly, the Authority of God the Father confirming this excellent Dignity, *as though God did beseech you by us*, and as if Christ himself stood by and prayed men, *we pray you in Christs stead.*

Fifthly, here is *res considerata, & modus considerandi*; The Gospel Embassie it self.

Secondly, the way and manner of Gospel Ministers delivering of Gods Message and Errand unto the People; and that not in a way of severity and rigour, but beseeching and intreating to be *reconciled to God*

Now the Doctrinal truths which are to be Collected and deduced hence are these.

First that the Foundation of our eternal Salvation is laid by God in Christ. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.*

Secondly, Gods Ministers have their Commission from Heaven, they come in the Name of the great King of Heaven and Earth, and are his *Commission-Officers.*

Thirdly, that God who might come in flaming Fire to consume us in a moment, cometh to us in the greatest Mercy, Tenderness, and Condescention, Praying and Beseeching us to be reconciled unto him.

Fourthly, that God and Man are at a great distance.

Fifthly, Reconciliation unto God was the most glorious work that ever was wrought, and the most blessed word that ever was heard, But I must not think to grasp all these. But the truth that I intend to insist upon, is this: That it is the great Honour and Dignity of the Ministers of the Gospel to be the Ambassadours of Jesus Christ. But I will first speak something of their Duty: and then Secondly, of their Dignity. Thirdly, of mans reconciliation to God, in the Application.

The words of my Text, as you have heard, are an illative Conclusion drawn from the Premises, *vers.* 19 there is set forth the Reconciliation on Gods part: He though *Pars læsa*; the Party greatly and grievously injured and offended (the greatness of an offence grow-

ing from the dignity and excellency of the person offended, and this makes it *Crimen læsæ majestatis*. so hainous and Capital, high Treason indeed against the Crown and Dignity of Heaven) yet contrives and designs this great work of Reconciliation.

God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself; namely, by his Merit and Intercession; for as the greatness of the injury grows from the dignity of the person offended, because there the worth of the offended person is hurt, so the worth of him that makes satisfaction doth grow from him that makes satisfaction; because here the yielding of honour is looked into, which depends upon the Dignity of him that yields the honour.

And hath committed unto us the word of attonement or reconciliation. Καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς shewing that a Minister of the Gospel should have the Doctrine of Reconciliation first fixed and placed in his own heart, and so speak from his own heart to the hearts of others, and comfort others with those comforts wherewith he himself hath been comforted of God.

When a man is no stranger unto those things he delivereth unto others; how many are there who onely have a humane knowledge of divine things?

There is nothing more easie (saith Bishop *Hall*, *Cent.* 2. *Med.* 91.) then to say Divinity by rote, and to discourse of Spiritual matters from the Tongue or Pen of others; but to hear God speak it to the Soul, and to Feel the Power of Religion in our selves, and to express it out of the truth of experience within, is both rare and hard. All that we feel not in the matters of God is but hypocrisie, and therefore the more we profess, the more we sin. *Luther* felt what he spake, and had experience of what he wrote; and being to, speak of our Justification by Faith in Christ, saith he, In my heart this one Article reigneth, even the Faith of Christ, from whom, and unto whom all my divine studies have recourse to, and through continually.

Saith S. *Paul* πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός; and who is sufficient for these things? Who is sufficient for the ministry of Life? Who hath fit and particular qualifications for such places? for matters of such weighty and great importance, for so great a charge as is committed to them? If a man were to paint the Sun, or to limn out the nature of a Soul, who could instruct him what Colours he must use? It is not enough that men have publick vote for publick places, but they must have suitable Endowments. He that thinks to act for God, must have qualifications from God.

There

There must proceed a mission and Commission; or else whosoever runs abroad, had better have staid at home. 1 *Tim.* 3. The Apostle lays down their particular qualifications, who shall be fit for such places, and he would have us look to whom he hath qualified. That our most Reverend Bishops, most instructed in the Government of the Church, and most highly dignified in it, should take great heed whom they bless: Such as may know how to behave themselves in the Church. This calling by man is not to be despised. For it is not enough, as *Luther* observes, for a man to have the Word and pure Doctrine, but he must also be assured of his Calling, and he that entreth without this certainty, entreth to no other end, but to kill and destroy. For God never prospereth the labour of them that are not called. And although they may teach some good and profitable matter, yet they edifie not. A Minister must be φιλόξενον. 1 *Tim.* 3. 3. given to Hospitality, a lover or user of Hospitality, according to the Apostles exhortaion, as we have therefore opportunity *let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the Houshold of Faith.* And also after the Example of our heavenly Father, *who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good*, Matth. 5, 45. And for that the common sort approve of friendship by profit. *Non ex benedictis, sed ex beneficiis.*

But especially a Minister must be διδακτικὸς apt to teach, ready to teach, ever ready prest to do any thing which the Lord hath given him in charge; to feed the Peoples Souls with divine meat, to approve himself a Pastor after Gods own heart, ever labouring to imitate our Blessed Lord and Saviour, *Matt.* 5. 2. who so *opened his mouth* that he *taught the People* the way of life and Salvation, and that with most admirable Wisdom, excellent Grace, singular Meekness, ardent Zeal, and Authority unusual, not respecting any mans person, so that *never man spake like this man.* Joh. 7. 46.

And as God said to *Moses Exod.* 23. 13. *In all things that I have said unto you be circumspect*, הִשָּׁמֵרוּ Ye shall be wary, or take heed to your selves, that ye transgress not. So our Saviour gave the charge unto his Disciples to be as *wise as Serpents, and harmless and innocent as Doves.* Matt. 10. 16.

Christ would have them Wise and Innocent. The Serpent hath too much subtilty, but wants simplicity, and innocency; therefore the simplicity of the Dove, and the wisdom of the Serpent make a good mixture; yet of the two, it seemeth more safe to want wisdom then innocency; better to erre for want of wit, then to deceive with too much.

Nocentissimi autem qui non simplices, sicut stultissimi qui non sapientes, præstat minus sapere quam peius, errare quam fallere.

Tertull. adversus Valent. *Cap.* 2.

This must be our rejoycing according to that golden saying of the Apostle, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Again, a Minister must be a Labourer not a loyterer in Gods harvest *Whereunto I also labour, striving*, saith the Apostle, Εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος, Sweating and taking great pains, bearing the burden and heat of the day. *Col* 1. 29. Which may be most truly verified of him, who laboured more abundantly then all; as his works in the New Testament do sufficiently witness. Christ never bad us pray for loyterers and lookers on; such as will rather let their bodies rust away, then spend and wear them away in the service of God.

The Ministry is a matter of Service; as an Honour, so a Burden. None are called into Gods Harvest but Labourers: And therefore what Work we have to do for God, we are to put forth our strength about it; our great Errand and business in this world being to save Souls, we are to apply our selves unto it with all our might; which is the Argument of the Holy Ghost, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.* Eccles. 9. 10.

Jeremiah saith, *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*, or deceitfully. *Jer.* 48. 10. *Maledictus qui facit fraudulenter.* Arias Mont.

If this curse do not touch them, which do the chiefest business of the Lord negligently, truly I know not whom the Prophet meaneth.

Saith *Paul* to *Timothy*, *Give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them*; ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι be in them; 1 *Tim.* 4. 13. and after the example of Christ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με; saith he, *I must be about my Fathers business. Luke* 2. 49. The Apostles professed unto the multitude of People that came about them, that they would give themselves *continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.*

Acts

Acts 6. 4. Many thrive not in their Studies, as not calling upon God for his assistance therein, and blessing thereupon, by frequent, fervent and constant Prayer; which is an excellent way to make a mans ministry shine. And also joyning fasting thereunto, as often as is convenient. Christ excused his Disciples in not fasting while he was with them: But took it for granted that they would fast, so soon as he was gone from them to Heaven. *Matt.* 9. 15.

This is that which feeds the Soul with the dainties of the Scripture, doth refresh and comfort with Contemplation establisheth with grace, and nourish with heavenly food. This is also the way to true Honour, and to do something in the World for the glory of God.

Jejunium scripturarum deliciis Pascitur, contemplatione reficitur, gratia stabilitur, cœlesti pane nutritur. Quotquot vires virtutum vidimus, sine jejunio non legemus ascendisse: nec aliquod magnum moliti sunt, nisi prius abstinentia præcessisset. Cypr. de jejunio & tentationibus Christi.

That our profiting may appear to all, many delivered out of ignorance, many purged from their filthiness, when we declare unto our People all the Counsel of God. Propound the will of God out of the Word unto the Edification of our People, when *the end of Preaching is love, out of a pure heart*, and a good Conscience, and faith unfeigned, labour to save our selves and them that hear us. 1 *Tim.* 1. 5.

This is the onely way to be great Blessings unto them amongst whom we live; when thousands are enriched by you. Many bless God that ever you came amongst them; and to have many Prayers of the Saints ascending to Heaven for a Blessing upon you in your Ministry; this is no small mercy. To be instrumental for much good unto the Church of God, this is one of the greatest happinesses in this world, To have large Opportunities for God and his Church. And when a Minister is a Voice, he is heard; Ignorance doth not silence him, nor laziness, nor abundance of preferment, nor indiscreet and distempered zeal; he is a Voice in his Habit, in his Gesture, and in his Life and Conversation, as well as in his Doctrine.

Now the Peoples eyes will be taught as well as their ears; who otherwise, will be most unmerciful and severely Critical. *Noah* was a Preacher of Righteousness; because his Life was an actual Sermon. An innocent and unrebukable life is a silent testimony of a good

good Minister. But especially when we manifest our love to Christ by *feeding his sheep*. Joh. 21. 15. By doing all that belongeth to the office of a good Shepherd to his sheep; either young and tender, or strong and well grown. This is also a sure argument of the Ministers love to Christ, when he doth Conscionably labour to Edifie those, whom Christ loveth, and for whom he dyed. When we labour to approve our selves abundantly to the Church of God, and to the Consciences of men: But not unto their humours.

To answer the end of our Education, the Cost and expence of God, Parents, and School-masters, the expectation of Friends, and any who have shewed us kindness.

And now what infinite pity is it, that any one way of sin should ever stand up to hinder us from serving of God, in the Gospel of his Son? or rob us of our Excellency, and Beauty, and Strength, and Glory: So much sin and lusts, so much loss of excellency. *Gen.* 49. 4.

When there is either lewdness or negligence of them that are able to do well in their Ministry, and yet do contrary, although your words be never so loud, yet if your works be lewd, though you were sons of Thunder, yet a crack in the Instrument will spoil the sound. Sin even in Ignorance is a talent of Lead; but sin in Knowledge is a Millstone to sink a man to the lowest. *Bona noscere, & mala facere*, to know good, and do ill, makes a mans own *mittimus* to Hell.

The pleasures of sin are dear bought in any, but especially in a Minister. *Heb.* 6. 6. This doth a world of mischief and hurt both in heaven and earth. The Minister that spends himself like a Taper to give light unto others, must not himself go out with an ill savour. When such a one as *David* sinned, he gave great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme; others may swear and swagger, and they matter not, nor wonder not. 2 *Sam.* 12. 4.

This was the reason why the *Indians* refused the Gospel brought by the *Spaniards*: because their lives were more savage then those Savages. It is said of *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, that although they were the Lords Priests, yet they were sons of *Belial*; they knew not the Lord, and by their sinful and corrupt Sacrificing, they made the People abhor the Sacrifice. 1 *Sam.* 2. 12. So many by their raw indigested slubbering of the Word, for want of study and meditation, do make men think that there is no more Wisdom, Purity, Perfection, Majesty and Glory, then they shew out of it; And therefore they

they stay at home, and say, They know as much as the Minister could tell them. When in a whole Sermon the hearer could not pick out one Note more, then he could gather himself.

Good Matter slubbered up in rude and careless words is made lothsome to the hearer; as a body mis-shapen with unhandsome Clothes. [B. *Hall.*] A good Minister as he maketh Conscience of Preparing his heart to serve the Lord, so he will not serve God with that which cost him nothing; He converses much with God that he may be holy; as the Object of his Preaching is Christ and the Gospel, and the Kingdom of Heaven, so he labours to be heavenly also. O how graciously should we deliver Gods Errand to the People, and they hear it with fear and trembling!

Holy Duties call for holy Preparation: *David washed his hands in innocency* before he *compassed Gods Altar.* Psal. 26. 6. And *Job* intending to sacrifice to God in the behalf of himself and his Children, sends to them solemnly to Prepare themselves. And if this be not done, if they sin not against more light, yet certainly against greater obligations.

Nay, the very Heathens themselves would not admit any to come to their Religious Services, unless they were prepared; as that of *Æneas* to his Father *Anchises*, upon his return from the Wars.

Tu genitor cape sacra manu, Patrioſque penates.
Me bello è tanto digreſſum & cæde recenti.
Virg. lib. 2. Ænead. p. 176.

Therefore they had one that cried out to the people, *Procul hinc eſte profani*; *All you that are unclean and prophane depart hence, and come not near us.* And shall Christians who have learnt better things, touch holy things with unholy hands, or unholy hearts? no, they must not, they ought not; Holy Duties call for holy Preparation, and in a most special manner of a Minister, that cometh so near unto the Lord. Men must be sanctified within and without, before they come to the performances of any holy duty: It is true that the Duty sanctifies, but men must be sanctified for the duty.

Again a Minister must be active and vigorous in the reproof of sin, *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.* 2 Tim. 4. 2. Young *Timothy* must Reprove and Rebuke; Preaching the same Truths with aged *Paul.* It is Gods Charge unto *Isaiah*, to *Cry aloud*, to *spare not*, to *lift up his*

Voice like a Trumpet, shewing the People their Transgressions and sins. Isa. 58. 1.

A Minister must sometimes change his note, differ from himself, sharpening his speech, dipping his words in gall as our Saviour himself did. *Ye Serpents, ye generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?* Whom yet we may find in another place, *Matt.* 5. as it were Piping and Dancing, and all melodious sweetness. When *Elymas* the Sorcerer, would have obstructed Saint *Paul*'s Preaching, and have turned the Deputy from the Faith. *Paul* set his eyes on him, and cryes out, *O full of all subtility, and all mischief; thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness.*

It's true the Gospel hath not one hard and unkind word against a Child of God; but always Grace and Peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Voice of the Ministers of the Gospel, *Peace be to you*, and *Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy.* Luke 2. 10.

Saith the holy Apostle, *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.* Rom. 8. 15. It is never a Spirit of Bondage again in that sense and meaning, as it was before.

But now on the contrary, there is nothing but woe unto sinful and prophane ungodly wretches; There is a time to reprove sinners and workers of iniquity, most sharply, as well as to comfort Saints.

God is content sometimes that we should derive from his Throne *Thunderings, and Lightnings, and* louder *sounds.* Rev. 4. 5. When *Israel* in *Moses* his absence corrupted themselves in making a molten Calf, *Moses* did not dance after their pipe, and laugh at their Idolatrous Image, and superstitious merriment: but with great zeal reproved their folly, and with indignation confounded their Idol.

So if the whole Nation be grown Sermon-proof, sitteth still and is at rest, settled on the lees, prophane, Athiestical; should we not be false Prophets to cry nothing but Peace? Certainly we must now Cry with *Isaia. Wo* to a sinful Nation. When mens lives proclaim Wars against God, must we not denounce Gods Judgments against them? We would be glad at every Sermon to say nothing but Peace to this Audience; but our God saith, *There is no Peace to the wicked.* We would sing with the Angels, *Peace on Earth, and good will towards men*: but *how shall we sing the Lords Song in a strange Land?* Ps. 137. 4. We have Preached Glory, Honour, and Peace, and Salvation, and an incorruptible Crown, and the choycest delights that heart could wish; and

and were not regarded: What remains then? but to Preach *Indignation, and Wrath, tribulation, and anguish upon every Soul of man that doth evil.* Rom. 2. 8, 9. Fire from Heaven, Plague, Sword, and Famine, Captivity, Emptied from vessel to vessel, hurried from place to place.

Mists, and Clouds, and Darkness, and Torments for days and nights, and eternal generations of Years.

We have Piped unto you, and ye have not Danced. Matt. 11. 7. we have sung, *With thee, O Lord, is mercy, that thou mayest be feared.* Psal. 130. 4. But now we must change our note, *With thee is* Vengeance *that thou mayest be feared.*

If the Spirit of Gentleness can do no good, a Rod must come; if the Songs of *Sion* cannot Mollifie, the Thunders of mount *Sinai* must Terrifie.

Eli though a good man, yet his Reproof wanted life, and indignation against sin; *Nay my Sons, for it is no good report that I hear.* 1 Sam. 2. 24.

In the matter of Preaching, O what weighty things doth the Word contain? Truths that should make the very bowels of the Minister to yern, and pour out his affections in the Pulpit, to rouze up the Peoples thoughts, and awaken them, from the sleep of sin, and security, wherein they have lain so long a time: Otherwise, when they hear of matters of Life and Death; Salvation and Damnation, they sit like blocks in their Seats as though it were no great matter. Thus the golden Bells of *Aaron* must be rung in several tunes. A Minister must labour to be like *John Baptist*, to be a burning and a shining Light, more then a *Voice*; there must be life and heat in his Ministry. *Joh.* 5. 35.

A Minister had need of many rare and excellent gifts, to open the Scriptures, to deduce from them, to convince of sin, to lay a good foundation, to move the affections (which the holy Scripture is so full of) And most certain it is that they which are of the most prodigious, wonderful and incomparable parts, are most sensible of their own inabilities. When God told *Moses* he would send him to deliver *Israel*, saith *Moses* to God, *Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?* Exod. 3. 10. When none in all *Israel* or *Midian* was comparably fit for this Embassage.

Which of the *Israelites* had been brought up a Courtier, a Schollar, an *Israelite* by Blood, by Education an *Egyptian, Learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.* Acts 7. 22. So that he was Learned, Wise, Valiant, Experi-

enced; Yet he saith, *Who am I?* 'Tis to be feared there is few amongst us look *Moses* his way; first upon himself, his own insufficiencies.

How few amongst us, that are named to any place, begins at *Moses*, *What am I?* where have I Studied, and Practiced sufficiently before, that I should fill such or such a place of Judicature? where have I served, and laboured, and Preached in inferiour places of the Church, that I should fill such or such a place of Dignity or Prelacy there? How few like *Abram* left to say in all humility, *I am but Dust and Ashes*; or *Jacob*, *Non sum dignus.* I am not worthy of the least of these Preferments: But every man is vapour'd up into Air, and (as the Air can) he thinks he can fill any place. Many run into the Magistracy; many into the Ministry; but who is sufficient for any one? *Who is sufficient for these things?* saith that ἡγούμενον τοῦ λόγου. Master of Speech. 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. This is spoken in the high Commendation of *Apollos*, that *he was an Eloquent man, and δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς; powerful, and mighty in the Scriptures.* Acts 18. 24. fervent in the Spirit, teaching diligently the things of the Lord. Therefore a Minister must have his senses exercised in the holy Scripture, even beyond the common sort of believers; so that he may be said with *Apollos*, Mighty in the Scriptures:

And though he may and ought to make use of Councils, Schoolmen, and Fathers with reverence; yet Apostolical Writings are onely to be appealed to, as the last Rule of Faith.

Thus having spoken something of the Ministers Duty, though in this Grave, Worthy and Learned Audience; not to be Your Instructor, but so as to bring things to your remembrance.

Now it remains that I should speak something of the Ministers Dignity; and for that you see it falls in my Text.

There is no Duty but the Lord crowneth it with some Priviledge, Blessing and Dignity, and that duty and service of the Ministry is not excluded, but expressed more eminently and emphatically.

Now then, *We are Ambassadours for Christ.*

This is the great Honour, and Dignity of the Ministers of the Gospel, to be the Ambassadours of Jesus Christ.

Therefore we magnifie our Office: and this heightens our Calling from the preciousnes of the Truth, which is to be manifested by us, The greatest Mystery in Heaven and Earth; that upon which depends the great weight of Salvation, a glorious and great dispensation is committed unto us.

First

First, Ministers are called *Watchmen. Son of man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the house of Israel.* Ezek. 3. 17. a Minister hath relation, and is debter unto the whole Church of God. This shews the Churches danger, and the Ministers duty, carefully to watch, and to warn, to foresee, and foretell danger; this is the Watchmans duty, as not to be *blind watchmen* given to *sleep* and slumber. *Isa.* 56. 10.

And upon this very ground the Apostle exhorts the *Hebrews*, that they should give Honour and Obedience unto the Guides, Leaders, Governours, and publick Officers of the Church, *because they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.* Heb. 13. 17. therefore Honour, Reverence, Obedience and high Estimation is due unto them, as *the Servants of the most High God, which shew unto* men *the way of Salvation.* Acts 16. 17.

Τοῖς ἡγουμένοις. *Nomen quæsivit ab omni ambitione prorsus remotum, & tamen authoritatis maximæ, si quis suo munere sanctè fungatur.* Beza *in loc. Non dubito quin de Pastoribus loquatur, & reliquis Ecclesiæ gubernatoribus. Nam neque tunc Christiani Magistratus erant, & quod vigilare eos dicit pro animabus, ad spirituale regimen propriè pertinet. Primo obedientiam, deinde honorem illis deferre jubet. Hæc duo necessario requiruntur, ut plebs fidem ac simul reverentiam Pastoribus habeat. Nam quo quisque plus laboris suscipit nostra causa, & quo majori difficultate, vel periculo se nobis impendit, eo sumus illi magis obstricti.*

Cal. *in Loc.*

Secondly, Because this obedience will make them do their duty with joy and not with grief; With grief and sorrow for your disobedience, when you oppose your selves, and are obstinate, and rebellious, and ignorant, and set not your hearts to Consider of what is taught.

Thirdly, Because their Rulers discouragement occasioned by their disobedience, will be unprofitable to the disobedient; *For that is unprofitable,* saith *Paul*; you shall be infinitely loosers at last, mourn and be in bitterness at the last.

The Ministers watch for your Souls to win and gain them if it might be. The Charge of Church Rulers is the heaviest of all Charges, because of Souls; the most assiduous and painful setting not of the body onely, but the Spirit on work; because it is a Charge of watching, the most dangerous of all Charges; because the account of lost

Souls

Souls within the Church, ſhall be required at their hands, *Acts* 20.26, 27. whether they have done all that which became them to do, to ſave them or not?

All the People ought to *watch.* Mark 13. 37. and *to be ſober and vigilant.* 1 Pet. 5. 8. But the Miniſter is to watch over all the Flock with a moſt vigilant eye. The two famous Academies of *Oxford* and *Cambridge*, are called the two Eyes of this Land, in compariſon of other places: And they are (*in Potentia* many of them) to be watchmen; excelling in more clear ſeeing reaſon, men of Piercing underſtandings, Pure phanſies, Quick inventions, Converſing with God in the immediate dialects of the Holy Ghoſt. Others ſee not but by their Eyes; they ſee with their own what is written in the holy Scriptures. They hear (as it were with their own ears) the very ſame word which God once ſpake unto his People.

They can perceive the peculiar and native Elegancy, the ſweet alluſions, and Cadences of Words, with the rich and lofty expreſſions in the Original, whereas others can but drink of the waters which run through the Chanels of Tranſlation; they have recourſe to the Fountains themſelves, drink at the Springs Head, where the waters muſt needs be both ſweeter and clearer: For *dulcius ex ipſo fonte bibuntur aquæ. Inſpectio fontium*, ſaith St. *Auſtin* (*de doctrina Chriſtiana*) is a ſpecial help for the underſtanding of the Scripture; what need he wait upon a Chanel, that may dwell by a whole Fountain?

That I may digreſs a little further.

Our Nobility themſelves, have delightfully devoted themſelves, in the morning of their time, to gather their choiceſt flowers out of theſe Gardens. Thoſe that ſtudy not the holy Languages, that dig not in theſe mines; they cannot find ſuch pretious Metal, ſuch goodly pearls, ſuch choice Jewels.

And ſuch of our Nobility as come to be fervent lovers of ſound Literature, purity of heavenly Doctrine, and godlineſs in ſincerity of heart, wherein true Nobility doth chiefly conſiſt (for indeed there is none truely Noble but the Virtuous) This is the way to add to the Renown of all their famous Progenitors, and propagate an everlaſting augmentation, and increaſe of all virtue, and honour to all that ſhall ſucceed them: Like *Romanus* who was Noble of Birth, but more Noble in his Martyrdom. *Not the Blood of my Progenitors*, ſays he, *but Chriſtian Profeſſion makes me Noble.*

I ſuppoſe it is granted by all wiſe men, that there is ſome knowledge of the Tongues neceſſary to the underſtanding of the Scripture:

for

for the Scriptures are underſtood by the ſame means that other humane Writings are; by the uſe of Logick, Rhetorick, Grammar, and thoſe Tongues in which they are expreſſed: though it is moſt true, that there is a ſingular light of the Spirit always to be ſought for by the faithful in the Scriptures, to an acquired habit, though not in that peculiar and ſpecial manner, when they were infuſed by the Spirit of God into the minds of men.

Though the Penmen of holy Scripture wrote not according to Art, (as ſome tell us) but according to grace, which is above all Art: (for unto them the Spirit of God did indite and dictate) Yet they that have written of Art, have found an Art in their Writings. *Non enim ſecundum artem ſcripſerunt, ſed ſecundum gratiam, quæ ſuper omnem artem eſt; ſcripſerunt enim quæ Spiritus iis loqui dabat; ſed tamen ii qui de arte ſcripſerunt, de eorum ſcriptis artem invenerunt.* Ambr.

Periculoſe docent, qui prius non didicerunt. They are dangerous Teachers, and unfit for Watchmen, that never were learners.

While they will not become Schollars of Truth, they become Maſters of Errour. Saith Chriſt, *I will make you fiſhers of men*; yet they went not preſently out of the Boat into the Pulpit, he was three year inſtructing them: Chriſt commanded them to ſtay at *Jeruſalem*, till the Holy Ghoſt deſcended on them; *Acts* 2. they muſt not *ſimul recipere & effundere*, Receive in and Pour out at once. *Heri catecumenus, hodie Epiſcopus.* But firſt be well principled, and full fraught with ſound knowledge, and good learning.

As all the *Iſraelites went down to the Philiſtines, to ſharpen every man his Share, and his Coulter, and his Ax, and his Mattock.* 1 Sam. 13.20. ſo in the Schools of the Prophets, ſtudious young men, do exceedingly ſharpen their underſtandings, grow, and improve themſelves inſenſibly.

The *Levites* under the Law were firſt Probationers, before they were allowed to be Practitioners. This is the way to be men of gravity and experience; to Thunder in Doctrine, and Lighten in Converſation, having an inward Principle of the light of holineſs in them from Chriſt, that they may ſhine out holily unto others, not onely in the Pulpit and Prayer, but in the whole Courſe of their lives alſo. That they may be able to ſay, as the Chriſtians did of old, *Non eloquimur magna, ſed vivimus*; We do not ſpeak great things, but we live them; they cannot look to be ſatisfied by the fruit of their mouths, *qui operibus deſtruunt, quod recte docent*, who ſay one thing and do another.

Secondly,

Secondly, Miniſters are called Prophets, ſuch as by the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt did foretel the ruine of ſin, and the reward of virtue, and were interpreters between God and Man.

Prophets and Seers, ſuch as were immediately ſtirred up by God, and extraordinarily aſſiſted by his Spirit, in ſuch weighty matters, as could not otherwiſe be effected.

Now Prophets are of ſuch account with God, that it is ſaid *God will do nothing, but he would reveal it unto his Servants the Prophets* Amos 3. 7. Kings, Prieſts and Prophets, were figures of Chriſt; all theſe were anointed with Oyl, to ſhew that they had greater grace, then the reſt. But eſpecially the Prophets are called Men of God; to ſhew that all that are of God will make much of Prophets for Gods ſake.

And *Job* ſpeaks of ſuch as *one of a thouſand, an Interpreter, that ſheweth unto man his righteouſneſs*, and Gods righteouſneſs. Job 33. 23.

Thirdly, All the people of God muſt work in Gods Vineyard. 1 *Cor.* 3. 9. but the Miniſters are co-workers with God. When we Reprove and Rebuke, and threaten for ſin, God he threatens; when we Exhort for Duties to be performed, Graces to be improved: God he Exhorts; when we Invite and perſwade, and Comfort by the Word, God he Comforts: and therefore thoſe things, which Gods Miniſters beſeech, or Command in the Name of Chriſt; people ought no otherwiſe to receive them, then if Chriſt Jeſus himſelf ſtood by, and commanded them: Therefore as Chriſt was content to be Baptized of *John Matt.* 3. 13. ſo be you content to be inſtructed of us: And they that think themſelves too wiſe, to be taught by us, let all ſuch remember that *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to confound the wiſe.* 1 Cor. 1. 27. Let them think us thoſe Fools whom God hath choſen to confound them.

And all ſuch as account our Preaching fooliſhneſs, we grant it unto them that periſh; *For the Preaching of the Croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs: but unto us that are ſaved it is the Power of God, and the wiſdom of God.* 1 Cor. 1. 18, 24.

We are Labourers together with God, ſaith the Apoſtle; and of believers in general, ſaith he, *Ye are Gods Husbandry, Tillage, Field*, or *Building*. 1 Cor. 3. 9. which ought to be cloſely united to one another in the ſervice of God.

Therefore they ought not to be rent into parties one from another. But the Miniſters are the Builders, to build men up in Faith and Holineſs and in the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. *Not for that we have dominion over your Faith, but are helpers of your Joy.* 2 Cor. 1. 24.

And

And that the fear of God might be in every Heart, and the worſhip of God in every Family, as ſo many Temples or Sanctuaries.

Fourthly, Though all Believers in general be the Servants of God, yet the Miniſters are the Stewards, and Diſpencers of the bleſſed myſteries of Salvation. *Let a man ſo account of us, as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God.* 1 Cor. 4. 1.

The Magiſtrate is (as it were) a Fingers of Gods Hand, the Miniſter a Steward in his Houſe, though in a large ſenſe all are the Lords Miniſters. Saith *Luther*, A Maſter of a Family hath ſomething to do, a Magiſtrate more, and a Miniſter moſt of all.

Fifely, Miniſters are called Stars, for that they muſt ſhine in the Firmament of the Church here, ſhine others, and out-ſhine all others, as Stars of the firſt magnitude, yea as the Sun it ſelf: When God ſet the Sun in the Firmament, he bad him ſhine there; ſo when God ſets a Miniſter in a place, he expects he ſhould ſhine in his Miniſtry. *The Heavens declare the glory of God*; Pſal. 19. 1. now how do they do it, but to the Eyes of men, and by the Tongues of men, for whom they were made: For as a mans Tongue is his glory, ſo it ſhould eſpecially be for the glory of his God. But for a Miniſter God hath promiſed moſt divine aſſiſtance, that he will be with *his mouth*, Exod. 4. 12. and ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples, *It is not ye that ſpeak, but the Holy Ghoſt* Mark 13. 11. Yet that extraordinary Promiſe was moſt proper to the times of the Primitive Perſecution. A Miniſters work is in a moſt ſpecial manner to Trumpet forth the praiſes of his God; to ſhine in the firmament of the Church here, and to out-ſhine the Sun in the Kingdom of his Father hereafter.

They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine, and they that turn many to righteouſneſs as the Stars for ever and ever. Dan. 12. 3. Firſt wiſe for the ſalvation of their own ſouls, that when they have *Preached unto others* they *themſelves may not become caſt-aways.* 1 Cor. 9. 27. Like thoſe Carpenters, that built the Ark to ſave others, and were drowned themſelves: Or like Porters of Great mens Gates, that let in others, but lodge without themſelves.

Secondly, Gaining of others, ſaving himſelf, and *them that hear him.* 1 Tim. 4. 16. *Timothy* muſt ſave himſelf and them that hear him; and then this is a pledge of our glory; the Promiſe is clear, *they that turn many to Righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever.*

Miniſters are like Lamps which conſume themſelves to give light unto others. And from hence ſome do ſtrongly imagine, that the bleſſed

Apoſtle had a peculiar regard and reſpect unto Miniſters in that 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* q. d. dye when you will, heavenly *manſions* are ready for you. *Joh.* 14. 2. your eternal happineſs and bleſſedneſs is ſecured, which being ſo; thoſe Miniſters which are ready to ſay with *Peter*, they will dye for Chriſt. O what pains then ſhould they take for him?

Miniſters are *the Light of the World*, in the places where they live, *Matt.* 5. 14. and where they are wanting, their People *ſit in Darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of Death.* Luke 1. 79. that is, they are Blind, and Ignorant, *Dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* Epheſ. 2. 1. rophane, without all the Life of grace in them; they are abominable in the Eyes of God, and all their actions are odious unto him, they are under the power of Satan, and under the wrath of God.

Though it is true, that Chriſt is the true Light of the World, as well as the true Salt of the Earth; yet it is as true, that Gods faithful Miniſters are the *Salt of the Earth*, Matt. 5. 13. to make people ſavoury both in heart and life; ſo that a conſtant, painful, faithful, powerful Miniſter Preaching to the Conſciences of men, there will be ſuch an efficacious effect of this, that even wicked men cannot ſo eaſily ſin againſt God.

Sixtly, Miniſters are called *Angels*; Rev: 2. 1. now Angels are Spirits, ſpiritual ſubſtances, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, he maketh his Angels Spirits, they are ſpiritual creatures; their Communion, their Food, their Affections, their minds are Spiritual; ſo a Miniſter, though he is a body, yet he is a ſpiritual man. If you ſay, ſo is every Believer, I anſwer; But a *Miniſter* is a ſpiritual man in a more ſpecial manner, as one that comes nigh unto God, his Office and Imployment is Spiritual. Divinity being of all Arts the ſupreme, moſt noble, and maſter-piece, proceeding in a ſpecial maner from God himſelf, treating of God, and Divine matters, and tending, and leading men to God.

1. *Uſe.*

For Exhortation to Miniſters, that they would be careful to teach the People: If people periſh for want of knowledge, ſhall Miniſters eſcape who are negligent in teaching? be ſure of it both ſmart together, they for their Ignorance, theſe for their Negligence; ſuch Miniſters have their doom in that Scripture, *Hoſea* 4. 6. *Becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge, I will reject thee*, whoſe office it was to inſtruct, admoniſh, reprove, intreat, and by all means to turn the people

ple from their evil ways. O that such men would be pleased to consider, that the best service they can do, the greatest honour they can attain unto, is to be faithful Labourers in Gods Vineyard. What an honour and happiness is it to a man, to be made a Common Blessing unto all men round about him? to be Eyes to the Blind, Legs to the Lame, a Mouth to the Dumb, a Staff to the Feeble, a Physician to the Sick, a Counsellour in hard Cases, a Watchman in Danger, a Captain in Conflicts; so much, and much more is a Minister unto his People; if he do his duty as he ought.

And unworthy are they of that office, who scorn to take the pains that belongs to it, or think it an easie, or small matter to save a soul from death.

2. *Use* Hence we may see by what hath been said, that the Office of the *Ministry* is no base office; nay, the whole world hath not a greater Office in it. The Apostle tells us, That Jesus Christ the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, was a *Minister* to confirm the Promise made unto the Fathers. The office of a *Minister* is an Angels Office; the Angels of Heaven, the highest of them in their places, never go on greater Errands. When they came to the Shepherds, what did they do, but tell of the Birth of Christ? *Peace on earth, and good will towards men.* Luke 2. 14. And is not this our business also? to treat between God and man, about eternal life? We are the Friends of the Bridegroom, *We are Ambassadours for Christ, and God doth beseech you by us.* We are sutors not for our selves, but for him; desiring to *Espouse you unto one Husband, and to present you chast Virgins to Christ.* 2 Cor. 11. 2. Our work is to Cater for Heaven, to *feed the flock of God,* 1 Pet. 5. 2. to win souls, to gather together with Christ, *Matt.* 12. 30. to bring in Custom for the Kingdome of God. So that a *Minister* doth not darken knowledge, but his Lips keep and disperse Knowledge. *Prov.* 15. 7. and the people therefore *should seek the Law at his mouth,* for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. *Mal.* 2 7. openeth the window to let in the light; breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.

Is he then a Contemptible person which bringeth the Message of God? which hath the name of an Angel, the ministry of Life; or else what is the meaning of the Text, *Now then we are Ambassadours for Christ?*

Certainly the least man in the *Ministry* ought not to be contemned. As in a Building, some bring Stones, some Timber, others *Morter,*

and ſome perhaps bring onely Nails; yet theſe are all uſeful in their places; the very Nails ſerve to faſten the work in the Building.

Thus the Church of God is a ſpiritual Building; ſome *Miniſters* bring ſtones, like *James, Cephas*, and *John, Pillars* in the Houſe of God. *Gal.* 2. 9. are more eminent and uſeful: Others uſeful pieces of Timber, though not Pillars, others leſs; they may have but a Nail in the Work, yet all ſerve for the good of the Building. The leaſt Star gives light, and the leaſt drop moiſtens; *Grandis dignitas Sacerdotum*, &c. *Hieron.* in *Ezek.* The leaſt *Miniſter* is no leſs then an Angel; the leaſt Nail in the *Miniſtry* ſerves for the faſtening of Souls unto Chriſt; there is ſome uſe to be made even of the loweſt parts of men, the weakeſt *Miniſter* may help to ſtrengthen ones Faith, though all are not Apoſtles, all are not Evangeliſts, all have not the ſame dextrous abilities in the *Miniſtry*, yet all edifie: And ſometimes it comes to paſs, that God crowns his labours, and ſends, moſt fiſh into his net, who though he be leſs skilful, is more faithful, and though he have leſs of the Brain, like *Jacob* in reſpect of *Eſau, Gen* 25. 27. yet he may have more of the Heart, go away with the Bleſſing; and therefore not to be Contemned.

Let a man ſo account of us, ſaith the Apoſtle, *as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God.* 1 Cor. 4. 1. *q. d.* Take heed how you ſleight our *Miniſtery*; you cannot deſpiſe, ſleight, and contemn our Perſons and Office, and have Life and Salvation. You cannot have the the myſteries of grace, ſaving knowledge, regeneration, and faith, without us, effectual calling, Juſtification, and glorification. What the Lord may do in an extraordinary manner, that I will not diſpute; but this is Gods ordinary way, which he hath eſtabliſhed, and we may not expect another; not a new Revelation from heaven. *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher.* Acts 26. 17, 18. Saith God to *Paul, I ſend thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light.* There is Effectual calling; under which is comprehended union with Chriſt, Regeneration, inabling us unto Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [That they may receive remiſſion of ſins.] there is juſtification; under which is contained Gods remiſſion of our ſins, and his acceptation of our perſons, unto Life and Salvation. [And an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.] There is glorification, under which is couched as well Gods gloriſying of us in this life:

Firſt,

Firſt, By conferring upon us glorious priviledges, as Adoption, Kingſhip, crowning every good ſoul with that ſtile, *Regale ſacerdotium, Royal Prieſthood* 1 Pet. 2. 9. to be Royal without Prieſthood, ſeemed not to him Dignity enough, and indeed of all the Offices of Chriſt his Prieſthood is the main.

Secondly, Imparting to us here in this world glorious graces, and thereby inabling us to glorious performances.

Thirdly, His Crowning us with glorious Joys, and ſweet peace of Conſcience.

So then, that which I clearly collect from the words, is this; That the Preaching of the Goſpel, is the means appointed by God, whereby we ſhall be Called, Juſtified, and Sanctified. Therefore our Office is no mean Office.

When the Prophet *Eliſha* ſent fot *Naaman* the Leper, to come unto him, theſe were his words, *He ſhall know that there is a Prophet in Iſrael.* 2 Kings 5. 8. ; s though all the glory of *Iſrael* were chiefly in this, that they had Prophets, and others had none.

So when *Eliſha* was dying, *Joaſh the King wept over his face, and cryed, O my Father, my Father; the Chariot of Iſrael, and the Horſemen thereof.* 2 Kings 13. 14. Shewing that the Chariots of *Iſrael*, and the Horſemen thereof, do not ſo ſafe guard a City as the Prophets which teach it, and pray for it.

How joyful and glad was *Lydia* when ſhe could draw, and conſtrain *Paul*, and *Silas* to her houſe? *If ye have judged me faithful to the Lord*, ſaith ſhe, *come into my Houſe, and abide there.* Acts 16. 15. ſhewing that never any Gueſts were ſo Welcome to her Houſe before.

The *Shunamite* perceiving that *Eliſha* was an holy man of God, ſpake unto her husband to build a new Room to welcome him, and to keep him with her, ſhe thought all the places in her houſe too bad for him. 2 *Kings* 4. 9, 10.

How much did the *Galatians* make of St. *Paul*? that he ſaith, They would have plucked out their own *eyes*, if it had been poſſible, to have done him good. *Gal.* 4. 15.

How beautiful are the feet of them, that Preach the Goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. Rom. 10. 15. So it is evident, and manifeſt that once a Miniſter was eſteemed like a Miniſter. And hath God bidden you deſpiſe them now, which bad you honour them before? 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. Let the Elders that Rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who Labour in Word and Doctrine.

Such

Such as apply their spirits most to the glory of God, and the Publick good; especially such as are *Timothies* in their houses, *Chrysostoms* in their Pulpits. S. *Chrysostom* was such a golden mouth'd Preacher, *Mellitissimus Christi Concionator*; he was so admired for his sweet winning Eloquence, as that all the people cryed out when he was like to be silenced, *Satius est ut sol non luceat, quam ut non doceat Chrysostomus*; We had better want the Sun, then the Preaching of St. *Chrysostom*.

And S. *Austin studied* to make his language sweet and harmonious, and acceptable to Gods people. Some degree of Eloquence seems to be meet for a Minister; for *Moses* saith to God, *I am not Eloquent*. Exod. 2. 10.

3. *Use*. Thirdly, Hence we may see who are the best Ministers; not they that can plot most for Preferment, or can Preach most for Applause, ambitious of a little popular breath; but he that setteth himself with all his might to do good. *He that winneth souls is wise*. Prov. 11. 30. because of the great difficulty of this work, he is wise to himself, he lays up a good foundation against the time to come. They are the best *Ministers* that carry people to heaven; though I know a Converting work is not for us, but for the Holy Ghost; *rostra habet in Cœlis, qui corda docet*. Yet sometimes the Lord is wonderful powerful and efficacious, by that word which we preach, piercing through the very hearts and souls of men, and leaving impressions of an immortal nature upon their spirits.

How fain would Christ have saved the people of *Jerusalem*, the name is doubled to express the truth, and certainty of his great affection. *How often would I have gathered*, &c. *Matt.* 23. 37.] God offered them mercy, while they had the dispensation of the means of grace.

And good *Ministers* like a Hen which clocketh her Chickens, together from the Kite, so they clock you together from the Serpent. They would fain do so. *Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord, we perswade men.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. the wrath of God is an unsupportable burthen; Who is able to dwell with devouring fires and everlasting burnings? therefore would we perswade men, all men. When *Agrippa* was almost perswaded to be a Christian, saith *Paul*, *I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me were both almost, and altogether*. Acts 26. 28. 29. A good Minister would carry all his people to heaven with him.

How deeply is *Moses* affected that the sin of *Israel* might be forgiven, *Exod.* 32. 32. what extraordinary zeal and love for the salvation of men? and as if his joy would have been utterly drowned in the destruction

deſtruction of the Church, or had no part in the Election of Grace. *Tertullian* underſtandeth it typically and figuratively of Chriſt the good Shepherd, who was to be exhibited, and to Dye for the Sheep.

Certe quidem bonus Paſtor animam pro pecoribus ponit, ut Moſes non homini adhuc Chriſto revelato, etiam in ſe figurato ait, ſi perdis hunc populum, inquit & me pariter cum eo diſperde. Tertull. de fuga in Perſecutione. *Cap.* 11.

And it is true that *Moſes* was a typical Mediator, and did atone for them. *Exod.* 32. 30. With what a bleeding heart doth St. *Paul* ſpeak for the ſalvation of the Jews? *Rom.* 9. 1, 2, 3. fervent appearing in the degree of it, with this unexpreſſable adjunct, *great heavineſs.* Secondly, Continuance of it, *Continual ſorrow in my heart: for I could wiſh that I my ſelf were accurſed from Chriſt.*

And truely we that are the *Miniſters* of the Church of *England*, might ſpeak this even with tears of blood, if we were able, when we conſider how many people in *England* ſeem to looſe the hope of a good beginning, who have ſuck'd their firſt *ſincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. in waiting upon God in his publick ordinances, and bleſſed God that they might wait, ſeemed to be in a good forwardneſs, in the of way of Life and Salvation, confeſſed that they have received comfort, and will ſtill to this day acknowledge it; yet by reaſon of ſome who never (we have cauſe to fear) were converted unto Chriſt, but unto an opinion, Fantaſtical ſpirits which in Corners pour out their Poiſon, and come not at the Congregations, as *Luther* ſpeaks; and ſo they fall off and turn either unto Athieſm, or Quakeriſm, *&c.* And there is no doubt, but that this hath been no little grief and trouble unto our godly and diſſenting brethren themſelves, when they ſee ſuch ſad effects of that doctrine which they have preached. It is one good argument of piety to love the place where God ſpeaks, the houſe of his preſence. *Pſal.* 26. 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy houſe, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.* As the Sun ſhines gloriouſly though no eye behold it, and pure waters flow from the fountain though none drink of them; ſo Miniſters are the light of the world, though few be enlightned by them, and the ſalt of the earth, though few be ſeaſoned by them.

4. *Uſe.* Let me then Exhort you all unto this happy Reconciliation with God. Reconciliation preſuppoſeth a breach; and indeed this was the greateſt that ever was made by reaſon of the ſins of man.

There was a heavy war denounced in the *inimicitias ponam*, when God

God raiſed a war between the Devil and us *Gen.* 3. 15. Gods wrath provoked, man thrown out of *Paradiſe*, Curſed in his name, nature, body, ſoul, ſenſes, friends, and whatſoever he takes in hand. *Adams* Poſterity as well as himſelf became bondmen to Hell; the Earth made barren for his ſake, and all the days of his life he was to eat his bread in the ſweat of his face, *Man* an enemy to God, God and man at a very great diſtance (I mean a diſtance of ſtate and condition) and ſo unhappy man deſireth to continue, never to have to do with God for ever.

And how ſad and dreadful is it to conſider, how averſe men are unto all means that can be uſed to reduce them, and bring them back again to God. They think not of him, they ſpeak not of him, *deſire not the knowledge of him, nor any of his ways.* Job. 21. 14.

And ſome they can never be far enough from God, and therefore the Prodigal went into a far Conntrey. Men having loſt their Communion, fellowſhip, friendſhip, and acquaintance with God, deſire ſo to continue, like ſome of the *Iſraelites*, who began to be in love with their bondage and ſlavery in *Egypt*.

And how many thouſands and millions have we cauſe to fear there be, who are dead while they live, or at the beſt but *luke-warm*, ſuch as Chriſt threatens to *ſpue them out of* his *mouth.* Rev. 3. 16. ſerving of God in ſuch a ſleight, perfunctory negligent and careleſs manner, only for faſhions ſake, and by fits, ſometimes perhaps pray when the night comes, hear when the Sabbath comes, faſt when Lent comes, and think to repent when death comes.

And alas all this while, they are under the wrath and Curſe of God, liable to all the miſeries of this life, to Death it ſelf, and thoſe pains that are endleſs, eaſeleſs, and remedileſs.

And yet men are in a golden Dream, and bleſs themſelves in their evil ways until the very flames of Hell take hold on them. The Lord threatens, *he will not ſpare them*, but his *jealouſie and anger ſhall ſmoke againſt them, blot out their name from under heaven.* Deut. 22 20. ſeparate them unto evil; what can be more miſerable and dreadful then and deſolation?

Let me then in the name of God Exhort you all to ſeek the Lord in good earneſt while he may be found. Know in this your day the things of your eternal peace, without which you had better never to have come upon the Stage of the World. O what will become of men at that great Day? that have all th ir time here been *found fighters againſt God, treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath.* Acts 5. 39. Rom.

Rom. 2 5. every day carrying a Faggot to that Pile, which ſhall burn them for ever, a Brand to that Hell, which Sin, and the Wrath of God hath made ſo hot already. O for men to be in the very *gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity*! Acts 8.23. poſſeſſed with moſt wicked malice, ſlaves to the Devil to do all manner of wickedneſs; to be given up to blindneſs of mind, utterly deſtitute of the true knowledge of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt; under *ſtrong deluſions*, to take pleaſure in *believing lies*. 2 Theſ. 2. 11, 12. This is the greateſt judgment that can befal you, unleſs the earth ſhould open and ſwallow you up, like *Korah, Dathan*, and *Abirams*. Numb. 16. 32, 33. when Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, went all quick to hell together.

Yet for ought we know while God in juſtice killed their bodies, he might in mercy ſave ſome of their ſouls. He that repenteth not to day, will have one day more to account for, and one day leſs to repent in: And who knows what may depend upon one day?

Yet Prayers and Tears may do you good. But ſtay a while; and though ſtreams of blood ſhould flow from you, and you ſhould cry and howl to God to all Eternity, it would never do it; therefore know your time. It is a happy thing for a man to do a buſineſs in ſuch a time wherein he may have the comfort of it, the benefit of it.

God proclaims and ſays to every one of you, *this day*; Friend, poor ſoul, as ever you expect to receive mercy, look to it now: for now the golden Scepter is ſtretched forth, now is the acceptable time and the day of grace and ſalvation; come in and accept of the offers and tenders of grace and mercy now, or elſe you may be loſt and gone for ever, *qui jam non credit impoſterum ſentiet*, he that will not now believe ſhall hereafter feel, ſooner or later, *The ſinner an hundred years old ſhall be accurſed*. Iſa. 65. 20. *Tua res agitur non Dei*; thou art the perſon concerned, this buſineſs concerns thy life, thy Eternal eſtate: ἐκ οἵτε καταλλάξατε ἑαυτοῖς τὸν Θεὸν, ὁ γὰρ ἐκείνῳ ἐστιν ὁ ἐχθραίνων ἀλλ' ὑμῖς. *Chryſ.* in Loc. It is not ſaid, Reconcile God to your ſelves, for God doth not make the breach, but reconcile your ſelves to God.

Certainly it concerns men, that have not made their peace with God, to ſpend their days in bewailing their ſinful and miſerable condition, to exchange all their carnal joy for ſome godly ſorrow, that God may give them that in tears which they could never find in ſenſual pleaſures, that God may give them ſalvation; Τῷ πενθήματι τὴν σωτηρίαν συνεζευγμένην, Naz. *Orat.* 17. God hath joyned ſalvation, with ſorrow and ſighing, godly ſorrow, and ſighing is the ſouls food, and the minds

refection. Therefore do not ruffle it out in the world, taking your fill of Pleaſure, as if this world were made on purpoſe for you to ſport in; Remember what the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaith, *And what will ye do in the day of viſitation?* in the great Day, *whom will ye flye for help to?* Iſa. 10 3. when the Earth ſhall burn, and the Heavens ſhall flame, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and all the Tribes of the Earth ſhall mourn before the Lord. Although the Lord keep many terrible privy Seſſions, and ſharp and ſevere Viſitations, for to keep this world in order, yet he hath reſerved the great Aſſiſe, the great Viſitation until the laſt Day.

And therefore is this a time to be carnal, and ſecure? and ſleeping, when you ſhould be running for the Crown of glory? to be an Athieſt in the world?

The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not ſeek after God, God is not in all his thoughts. Pſal. 10. 4. or all his thoughts are, *there is no God. non eſſe Deum ſunt omnes cogitationes ejus. Junius. This is that fool that hath ſaid in heart, there is no God.* Pſal. 14. 1. it is rather an Option then an Opinion, ſaith S. *Auſtin*, He could be content there was none. *Ita tacitus loquuntur eſt impius, non eſt Deus, vel utinam non eſſet Deus.*

God is not the object of his joy, his thoughts, and meditations; either is he careful and ſolicitous about heavenly and divine things being intentive about prophane. The beſt things are ſhut out of his heart, *Intus exiſtens prohibet alienum*; he lives as if there were no God, with no due ſenſe, awe, or reverence of the moſt Holy, and glorious God: Theſe men are moſt truly ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ *Without God in the world.* Eph. 2 12. *hic labor, hoc opus.* And therefore to get men to be reconciled to God; this is a work indeed, a very difficult work: Well might *Paul* ſay, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?*

Herein conſiſts the great work of Reconciliation, when Parties between whom hath been friendſhip, and afterward breaches made, then they are brought into favour again; as S. *Bernard* tells us in his 32. Sermon *ſuper Cantica. Quid eſt reconciliatio, niſi iterata animorum diſſidentium conciliatio?* And the ſame Father tells us, that there are three to whom we ought to be reconciled, To God, Angels, and Men. Unto Men by *manifeſt* deeds, clear and ſhining, which are to be wrought before men *Joh.* 3.21. *Let your light ſo ſhine on earth to the glory of your Father in heaven.* Matt 5. 16. There's a demonſtration. Feed the hungry, relieve the Poor; There's another demonſtration.

When this is done in Faith; and in Obedience to the Commandements

ments of God? 'tis one excellent way for rich men to lay up some of their treasures in heaven: and then let their hearts follow their treasure thither.

This is a brave noble way of giving Earth a translation, and to improve every Alms and Penny to the best, laying up in store for themselves, a good Foundation against the time to come. *That they may lay hold on eternal life.* 1 Tim. 6. 17,18,19.

Secondly, Unto Angels by hidden and secret signs, which are sighs and groans; *Angelorum delitiæ Pœnitententium lacrymæ.* and other signs of repentance which please and delight the Angels, who are sent about Gods Messages to this Earth.

There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15. 10. And good Ministers are glad too, when they can perceive it. How glad was the holy Apostle when he perceived it in the *Romans*, and asked them, *What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* Rom. 6 21.

Certainly, sin is not a gainful way; without doubt, more men are impoverished and beggered by sinful courses, then enriched; sin cannot be the way to Glory and Honour: for we dare not avow our sins, but are ashamed of them, when they are done; fruitless, unprofitable before, shame and dishonour after.

Mens Souls are desperately sick of sin, and at Deaths door; must we tell them of Heaven, and an immortal Crown, and Kingdom; before repenting of their wickednesses, till they be first recovered in some measure from *the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity.* Acts 8. 22. from the jaws of Hell, and snare of the Devil? Revive them with the Gospel, before they be humbled with the Law? Without any humiliation, repentance, sighs, and grones; certainly we cannot give you comfort. We dare not apply the oyl of Consolation, till we have scoured your festred wounds with the sharp wine of Reprehension.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6. 7

If ye live after the flesh ye shall dye. Rom. 8. 13. When Iniquity hath played her part, then shall Vengeance leap upon the Stage. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* Psal. 9. 17. And that with a *Go ye Cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.* Mat. 25. 41.

Could we behold your Cheeks blubbered with Tears, your Hands beating your Breasts, like the poor penitent Publican *Luke* 18. 13. your Cryes resounding at Heaven Gates for mercy: or any way

but perceive your Repentance and Indignation against Sin;

Then should we think it high time, and seasonable, to sing as sweetly as we can, of the tender mercies of God, and the Riches of his grace, unto afflicted and broken spirits.

Thirdly, We must be reconciled to God by Purity, singleness, and sincerity of heart, wherein the perfection of the Gospel doth consist. *Mat.* 5. 8.

And now Men, Brethren, and Fathers, with what words shall I bespeak you all, to live to that God from whom you shine? That when the Grave shall be open for you, Heaven may not be shut against you. O you that are yet asleep in sin, is it not *high time for you to awake?* Rom. 13. 11. And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. The time of the light of the Gospel which is as it were the Dawning of that great everlasting Day; the words are an Alarm, or Summons unto spiritual vigilancy; an appeal to Conscience for the necessity of the Duty: And now knowing the time, the Propinquity and nearness of salvation, *The night is far spent.*

Shall the Heavens be all *in flaming fire*, 2 Thes. 1. 8. and the Elements melt with fervent heat, before you will begin to fear God? The Sun shined upon *Sodom* in the morning, and yet the horrible wrath of God fell upon them before evening, and thy Soul may be in Hell before the next morning; as that rich Churls, who reckoned upon many years, and had not a day to live. *Luke* 12. 20.

Shall the great Luminaries of Heaven, *the Sun and the Moon be darkened?* Mat. 24 29. before that soul of thine be inlightened? And the Stars fall down from Heaven, before thou wilt fall down in all humility before thy Maker, confessing and forsaking thy sins? Shall the Sea give up her Dead, before thou art alive? and the Harvest of the world to come, before the Seeds of grace, and eternal life be sown in thy heart? art thou so dead, and buried in sin, that no Sermon shall stir nor awaken thee? but the last Trumpet shall sound before thou wilt hear? O wo to thee when thy days are ended. Then the great Judgment, and Visitation will fall most dreadfully upon thee.

And yet I declare unto you this truth in the name of God, that there is not the worst, the vilest in the Congregation, that is come through the Providence of God, before God this day; but for ought we know it is possible, for thy sins to be pardoned, for God to be reconciled unto thee, and thy soul to be saved; though even now, an enemy, a rebel against God, a slave of sin, and Satan.

O

O therefore prize this Doctrine of Reconciliaton, preſer it above your appointed food, as *Job* did the holy Scripture; yea, before thouſands of gold and ſilver. *Job* 23. 12.

For upon your forſaking a Courſe of ſin, God will not onely pardon you, let all Suits fall, cancel all Bonds, quit all ſcores, but alſo receive you into favour.

Now herein the Lord infinitely excelleth all the Princes of the Earth. If a Subject offend his Prince, and his offence be hainous, and capital; he accounteth it a ſingular and great favour from his Prince, if he can be pardoned, but he ſhall never be honoured more, never be truſted more; But now the Lord doth not onely pardon great ſinners, upon true repentance, but he highly honours them, and Crowns them with very glorious Rewards, and the choiceſt Joys, and Delights that heart can wiſh.

And this may be ſaid with all grateful commemoration, and great truth, that when by Divine Providence, Almighty God the Father of all Mercies, returned our moſt dread Sovereign unto us the People of *England*, to the execution of his Kingly Office; he did not onely pardon many Offenders, but hath alſo honoured them with titles of quality, and places of truſt.

I will Anſwer but one Objection, and ſo I will draw to a Concluſion.

What infinite Pity is it to conſider, how ſome forſake all Religion, becauſe the Preachers do not Agree; or becauſe the Lives of Profeſſors give ſome offence?

But certainly there is no Cauſe why they ſhould miſlike the Word for the Preacher, or why they ſhould deſpiſe Religion for the Profeſſor.

Becauſe the Word and Religion, are not theirs which Preach it, and Profeſs it, but Gods.

The Seed ſown in good Ground, may grow, although the Sower had a dirty Hand; Gold Crowns and Scepters are excellent things, although they may be (ſometimes) in the hands of thieves.

There is nothing more frequent, then for the Laity to Patronize their ſins upon the example of others, and to fortifie their prophaneneſs from the infirmities of their Teachers. Wicked men love that in the Saints, which the Saints never loved themſelves: And is this wiſdom for a man to make their Foyl his Jewel? their Shame his Glory?

A Miniſters life is bad, therefore his Doctrine is falſe. O this is an harſh *Non ſequitur*.

Perſona

Perſonal offences ſuſpend not the Power of the Holy Ghoſt; but the bleſſing of Heaven goes along with the Office, and Function. I ſpeak not this for any one to take liberty to ſin, but for the ſatisfaction of ſome, and for the verifying of the truth.

The Ordinances of God, become effectual means of Salvation, not by any virtue meerly in themſelves, or in him that doth Adminiſter them, but onely by the bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit.

Now the Lord is not neceſſarily tyed to afford his Preſence, and to manifeſt his Power always in them; for God is a free Agent, and *inſtrumenta in divinis operantur acſi non operantur*. And if God withdraw himſelf, there is no more Power nor Majeſty in them, but a bare empty outſide, and no more.

Preaching is the Power of God unto Salvation, if the Lord diſcover himſelf, without which it is no more Powerful then the breath of a man, yet God hath tyed us to the word, and Ordinances; Becauſe it is the food of the ſoul, therefore as if you take away food from the body, it will pine; ſo without Preaching, the People will famiſh, for where no viſion is the people periſh.

And O what a miſerable thing it is, when a Land is darkened, and and the glory is departed? O the dreadful effects that will follow the Contempt of Gods Ordinances, and his Miniſters. When the Prophets went from *Jeruſalem*, then Sword, and Famine, and Peſtilence, and all the Plagues of God rained upon them, even as Fire came down upon *Sodom* ſo ſoon as *Lot* was gone out: And yet our Tribe is a hated Tribe. Of all Offices, the Office of a Reprover is moſt unwelcome, for that men love their ſin, and their luſts as their lives.

Gods faithful Miniſters, as they are ſet up by God in a ſpecial manner to oppoſe, and beat down the Kingdom of ſin, and Satan; ſo uſually they are ſingled out by the Devil and his Inſtruments, as the principal Butts againſt which the invenomed Arrows of Malicious hearts are moſt directed. And therefore not onely Serpentine Wiſdom, and Dove-like Innocency is neceſſary for them, above others: alſo Courage and Magnanimity, not to fear the faces of Men: Sanctity and Holineſs: but alſo Diligence and indefatigableneſs in that great Work which God imployes them about. St. *Paul* who was the moſt famous Preacher, and inſtrument of Gods glory, next to Chriſt, that ever was in the world, yet *counted an Enemy unto the Galatians*, for that *he told them the Truth*. Gal. 4. 16. and σπερμολόγος a Babler with the Philoſophers of *Athens*; The deadlieſt that *Demoſthenes* beſtowed upon

upon *Æſchines*, and the beſt the *Athenians* could afford St. *Paul*. *Micaiah* was hated, becauſe he dealt truely with *Ahab*. The braveſt Deacon that ever the world bred, was half a Martyr in the Pulpit. *Acts* 7. 54.

But although every baſe fellow ſtop his ear and harden his heart, againſt the God of Heaven, and will not obey our Meſſage, which we have from God: yet in a faithful diſcharge of our duty, we ſhall be glorious in the eyes of God; and if we cannot get them to the Banquet, yet we ſhall be welcome without them. *We are unto God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh.* 2 Cor. 2. 15. The faithful Miniſters labour whether it hit or miſs, is accepted of God; for as he who perſwadeth to evil, be it Hereſie, or Treaſon, is puniſhed, although he do not prevail, becauſe he intended it, for that he did labour it.

So he that doth his beſt to win men to heaven, though he effecteth not what he deſired, though he hath laboured in vain, and ſpent his ſtrength in vain (amongſt men) yet he ſhall be accepted, and his reward ſhall be with God.

Thus though our Calling is deſpiſed of men, yet it is honourable with God:

Even as the Ambaſſadour of a King glorieth in this, that he cometh not as a private perſon, but as the Kings Ambaſſadour; and becauſe of this Dignity, that he is the Kings Ambaſſadour, he is honoured, and ſet in the higheſt place, which honour ſhould not be given him, if he came as a private perſon.

So a Miniſter of the Goſpel, like the Kidgs Ambaſſadour, muſt magnifie his Office and Calling, for that he glorieth not in himſelf, but in the King which hath ſent him; whoſe Authority he deſireth to be honoured, and magnified.

Now let us all ſtand and admire at the infinite grace and favour of God, the Father of all Mercies, in beſtowing upon us, the People of *England*, ſuch great, and manifold Bleſſings; as our Ancient Government, publick Peace, much Plenty, *Proſperity within our Palaces*. Pſal. 122. 7. But amonſt all our joys, none ſhould more fill our hearts, and cauſe them to run over with thankfulneſs, then the bleſſed continuance of the Preaching of Gods ſacred Word amongſt us.

The Dew lies not onely upon *Gideons* Fleece, upon ſome particular perſons, but it is diſperſed generally, all the Kingdom over: Every man may take S. *Auſtins* counſel, *Tolle lege, Tolle lege*; every man amongſt us may be a Rabbi, Learned in the Laws, Converſant

in the holy Scriptures, and speaking the Language of *Canaan*; seeing that through the infinite goodness of God, our Princes are Christians, there is not that Persecution, Religion is not disturbed, we are not compelled to manifest the proof of our Faith by harder trials, *to resist even unto blood striving against sin.* Heb 12. 4. Sealing to the truth with our blood, as that holy Martyr *Ignatius*, and many others did. διὰ τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν μαρτυρίαι κατακειθεὶς πρὸς θηρία, ὅτι σῖτός εἰμι Θεοῦ καὶ δι' ὀδόντων θηρίων ἀλήθημαι, ἵνα καθαρὸς ἄρτος Θεοῦ ἀρεθῶ. And when he came to the wild Beasts to be devoured of them, and his bones crushed between their Teeth, saith he νῦν ἄρχομαι μαθητὴς εἶναι, *Now I begin to be a Christian. Ignat.* Epist. ad *Rom.*

In the History of the *Waldenses*, they petitioning, That seeing it was permitted to the *Saracens*, and *Turks*, and *Jews*, who are mortal Enemies to Christ, and the basest People in the World, to dwell peaceably in the fairest Cities of Christendom; that Pity, and Compassion might be shewed unto them, who have their whole Religion founded upon the Gospel, and worshipping the Lord Jesus; and that they might be suffered to live quietly in desolate Mountains, and Deserts, and Valleys, professing that they would live in all fear, and reverence of God, with all due subjection to their Lord and Prince, and to his Lieutenants, and Officers; and yet this Petition could not be granted.

The Church of God was so obscured, as it was not to be sought for in any external pomp in Publick places; but in Prisons, and Dens; *Non in tectis, & exteriori Pompa, sed potius in Speluncis, & Carceribus.*

Why then are a generation so angry and displeased? like *Jonah*, that did even Chide with God. By how much the less we are in our Passive obedience, by so much the more let us be in our Active. Let that strength be laid out for Gods glory, which might have been spent in suffering the Wrath of God, or the rage and fury of wicked men.

And let us all be earnest with God for his Church, That *the Gates of Hell may not prevail against it*; That the Lord would make his People ten thousand times more then they are; and increase their Graces, as well as add to their number. That all the Nations of the World may see the Salvation of God; that the Lord Jesus may abundantly see of the Travel of his Soul, and be satisfied.

That the Word of God may be as glorious, and as much prized by us the people of *England*, as ever it was by any Nation since the world stood

That

That the Ordinances of God may be in so much Power, and Purity, Beauty, Splendor and Glory, that Godliness, and the powerful Profession of it, may be more Honourable, then ever it hath been Contemptible.

That through the Power of the Gospel, and our careful Government, the Mouth of Wickedness and Prophaneness may be stopped, and subdued, and whatsoever is contrary unto sound Doctrine, and unto holy Practice.

That the Lord would be pleased to bless our most dread Sovereign Lord the King, with many and happy Dayes; Enrich his Royal heart with many singular and extraordinary Graces, make him as an Angel of God; a man after his own heart, and an Excellent Spirit of Government, that he may still know how to go in and out before so great a People; and may be the Wonder of the World in this Latter Age, for Happiness, and true felicity, to the honour of the great God, and the good of his Church.

That our Nobility may be Loyal, and Faithful; men of holiness and Religion, sparkling with ten thousand Glories, Vertues, and Graces; while they oblige their Servants, Tenants, and the Countrey round about them, by their holy Example to the practice of Piety, and the fear of God.

That our *Judges* may be *as at the first, and our Counsellours as at the beginning.* Isa. 1. 26. like *Moses, Joshua*, &c. Impartially Execute Gods Judgments upon the Enemies of the Church, and faithfully administer Justice among the People; no unrighteousness in Judgment: but *run down as Waters, and Righteousness as a mighty Stream.* Amos 5. 24. That there may be no complaining in our streets.

That our inferiour Magistrates may be *Able men, such as fear God; Men of Truth hating Covetousness.* Exod. 18. 21.

Our Gentry Sober, Vigilant, Temperate in all things; That they may Run in that heavenly Race set before them in the Holy Scriptures, and so *obtain an Incorruptible Crown.* 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25.

Our Ministers all as so many burning Lights, Pastors after Gods own heart.

Our Right Reverend Bishops, and Governours of the Church, imitating Christ, the Bishop of their Souls.

All the People receiving Gods Truth, in the Love thereof, and in the power thereof, men of Integrity, Innocency, and Sincerity:

The gloſs of Profeſſion without Sincerity, will off in a Storm; when a man hath not the Root, and principle of grace in him. *Mat* 13. 21.

But where this is, it obligeth a man cloſe to his Duty, both to God and Man. If I am Regenerate, and truely ſanctified; I do good Works how, and whenſoever occaſion is offered: As,

If I be a Miniſter of the Word; I obey the inward Calling of the Spirit, I accept the outward Calling of the Church; I Preach Abſolution of ſins to every Penitent Soul; I offer the Seals of Reconciliation to every Contrite ſpirit; I Comfort the Broken-hearted.

If I be a Houſholder; I govern my Family, I bring up my Children in the knowledge and fear of God.

If I be a Magiſtrate; the Charge that is given me from above, I diligently execute.

If I be a Servant; I do my Maſters buſineſs faithfully.

If I be a Subject; I live in obedience unto my Prince: For the ſame Commandement that binds and obliges unto the Fear of God, bindeth alſo to Honour the King. 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. to give honour and obedience in a ſpecial manner unto the higheſt Magiſtrate, ſo that he which hath not performed the latter of theſe Duties, is not to be thought to have performed the other ſincerely.

Duty binds us to give obedience to Evil Princes, in Conſcience of Gods Ordinance: And as an Evil Subject ſerves God for his Princes ſake, ſo a good Subject ſerves his Prince for Gods ſake.

Thus Obedience is given, if not *Principi*, yet *Principatui*; if not to the Perſon, yet to the Office.

Therefore in the fear of God, let us give all due obedience unto Authority; be men of meek and quiet ſpirits, in imitation of Chriſt, and according to his Command, *Mat.* 11. 29. who hath alſo intailed ſuch a bleſſing upon ſuch perſons as imports all good things. *Mat.* 5. 5. Is it not infinitely better to be a peace Maker, then a peace Breaker? They that live in obedience unto Government, have the Bleſſing, Benefit, and Protection of Government.

Whereas it is the property of wicked men to be unquiet, reſtleſs, ſuch as are without true Peace in themſelves, and ſeek to diſturb or moleſt others; as the word רשעים in the firſt *Pſalm* ſignifies. And therefore the Laws of the Kingdom do oftentimes moſt deſervedly take hold of them. O how may ſuch perſons, be aſhamed to live, and afraid to dye? when the whole Creation may grone, and travaile in pain by reaſon of their ſins?

Set your hearts now unto these things, *for what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown of Rejoycing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his Coming? Ye are our Glory and Joy.* 1 Thes. 2.19, 20. Weep in secret for all Abominations you see committed. Let our Reverend Visitors now set their faces against all iniquity, that no sin may be Countenanced, to Eclipse the glory of this Solemnity; so that with the glorious Company of the Apostles: The goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The noble Army of Martyrs: And the Holy Church throughout all the world: We may arrive to that *General*, Honourable, *and Glorious Assembly*, Heb. 12.23. to Celebrate the Praises of God; and give him due thanks world without end, *Amen.*

FINIS.

FINIS.

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